

Job Description*

The Role of the Reviewer

The advocacy role is an important part of any reviewer's job. Reviewers advocate for children and families at the case level. Beyond that, the reviewer will learn sufficient information to advocate for system reform when needed.

You have been selected as a reviewer because of your knowledge and interest in foster care and child welfare. Your role as a reviewer is not only defined by statute but is also very personal and intimate.

Each month, you will receive sensitive case material concerning children in substitute care. The law requires you to keep this information protected and confidential. When you are sworn in by the judge, you are swearing to keep confidential the information you learn about families and the sensitive case material you receive in the mail. Breaking this oath of confidentiality can bring serious consequences to the families involved, and you will be removed as a volunteer to the Utah Foster Care Citizen Review Boards.

After reviewing case materials, you will review cases in person and, with your fellow reviewers, make recommendations to the juvenile court and the agency that will help every child find a permanent home and/or become independent.

Because of the sensitive nature of issues that trouble families and your respect for the family as the foundation of your community, you must be nonjudgmental and objective in your attitude toward families and caseworkers. You will need to be fair and impartial in evaluating case plans and making sound recommendations.

As much as we all want to be actively involved and helpful, it is not the role of the reviewer to lecture, counsel or advise participants, or to disclose your own life experiences.

Your willingness to learn the structure of the substitute case system and your ability to deal effectively with professionals and family members, will enhance the quality of the work you perform. You serve an important role in the lives of children and families in your community.

Position Description

Reviewers are volunteers who serve in the area where they reside. They are responsible for reviewing the cases of children who are in out-of-home placement to ensure that the case plan is directed to securing permanency for each child and that appropriate services and treatment are offered.

* Adapted with permission from the *Oregon Citizen Review Board Manual* (January 1995).

Qualifications and Training Requirements

- A commitment to children and families focused on securing permanency for children.
- A commitment to at least one year of service, with regular attendance, punctuality and pre-service preparation a priority.
- Completion of reviewers=orientation training (currently 18 hours S required for new members).
- Eight hours of relevant additional training per year of service.
- One-half day of observation of a review prior to serving.
- Observation of a juvenile court proceeding is recommended.
- Commitment to taking an oath of confidentiality, and maintaining this oath.
- Maintaining a respectful, nonjudgmental demeanor in reviews and in all dealings with those involved in cases; presenting self and representing reviewers in a professional manner.

Position Responsibilities

- Regular attendance at your reviews. This is critical to the success of the program. Each reviewer is important and needed for a complete and thorough review. If you need to be absent, prior notification must be given to your Board Coordinator.
- Thorough preparation for reviews. Approximately 7 days prior to the review date, a package of information will be sent on each child to be reviewed. Each board member must spend advance time preparing the AFCCRB Case Worksheet@summary on each child in order to be thoroughly prepared for the review. Advance time in preparation may range from 20 to 60 minutes per case, depending on the complexity of the case and the range of materials included. Each Review Board may review between one and six cases per day.
- Active participation in the review. Each reviewer is expected to prepare thoroughly for each case and contribute to questioning and formulating findings and recommendations.
- , Active participation as a Waiting Area Coordinator to assist with observations, welcoming participants and facilitating the completion of the Comment Form.

Specific Responsibilities of a Reviewer

- Reads case information and prepares thoroughly for each review prior to the review day, completing a AFCCRB Case Worksheet® summary on each case.
- Participates in the questioning of participants at the review.
- Makes findings based on the information gathered in the review and the materials provided.
- Makes recommendations about each case based on the findings of the reviewing group.
- Considers the agency/court responses to recommendations.
- Is punctual on reviewer meeting days.

Additional Opportunities for Reviewers

- Service as a Regional representative on the statewide Steering Committee. This group meets quarterly to govern the Utah Foster Care Citizen Review Board, including the establishment of policy.
- Service as a Review Board Chairperson or Vice Chairperson.
- Advocate on behalf of children, families and communities by assisting staff on legislative, public relations and other ad hoc and ongoing committees. This may include writing letters to legislators, attending legislative sessions, testifying before commissions and committees, and planning public relations activities and assisting in their implementation.
- Contribute time and expertise as a volunteer trainer to assist staff in training new reviewers in the region.

New Reviewers

Prior to participating in a review, reviewers are required to complete the 18-hour orientation training and observe a review meeting for two to four hours.

New Reviewers also participate in a three month trial appointment to assure the volunteer desires to make a year long commitment to the FCCRB and staff assure volunteers are an active and appropriate participant of the FCCRB.

Experienced Reviewers

Experienced reviewers are required to complete eight hours of additional training each year of service.

Related trainings offered in the community or through other social service agencies may be approved by the FCCRB Board Coordinator to meet the mandatory training requirement, provided they relate to improving your ability as a reviewer. Training tapes and reading material may also be used for professional development.

Reviewers will be asked annually to complete a tracking form to report their fulfillment of the annual training requirement. This should be submitted to the FCCRB Board Coordinator by January 31 of each year.